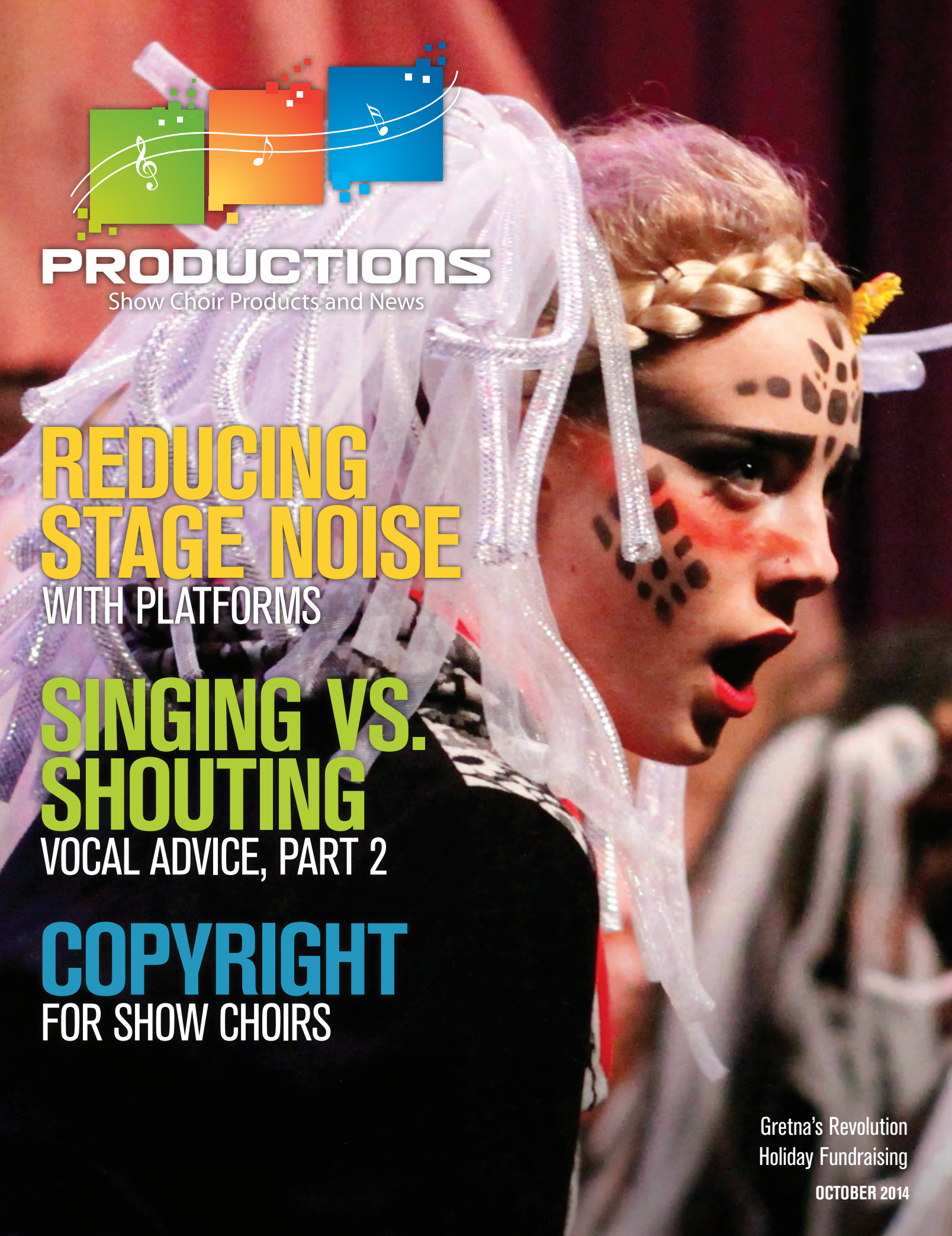

PRODUCTIONS

Show Choir Products and News

REDUCING STAGE NOISE
WITH PLATFORMS

SINGING VS. SHOUTING
VOCAL ADVICE, PART 2

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Gretna's Revolution

Holiday Fundraising

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by Dina Else

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CHOIR SPOTLIGHT

Gretna's Revolution and Director Pat Ribar
by Rachel James Clevenger
Director Pat Ribar is in the "memory business," assisting his students in leaving high school with wonderful moments to recall about their show choir experiences.

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HOLIDAY FUNDRAISING

The Psychology of Holiday Fundraising
by Cassidy Clevenger
With charitable giving at its highest between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, this may be the ideal time to promote your cause.

Cover photo provided by Gretna's Revolution.

EDITOR'S LETTER

As we embark on training for another competition season, choirs around the nation are developing their performances, working out costuming, designing elaborate sets, and continuing the fundraising efforts that make attending the competitions a possibility. Having talked to countless directors, I know that many leaders approach competition from radically different stances. Some choose not to compete at all—and not because of lack of funding. Those leaders often opt-out of competitive arenas because they want their students to focus on a love of music and a joy for performing.

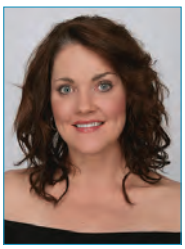
Many others, though, believe competition encourages students to improve and achieve more than they would without a chance to "prove themselves." Those directors and students also revel in seeing other choirs at their best and performing at their highest levels. The distinction often comes in the way directors approach each competition: Is a Grand Champion award the only acceptable result? Is every second or third place ultimately a failure?

Because the leaders of each show choir are important mentors for every child they encounter, it is so crucial that directors model a behavior toward competition that benefits those students, not just in the moment but as they are developing life-long attitudes about personal success and failure, along with a self-measurement for achievement.

Dr. Alan Goldberg notes that winners experience a range of emotions from feeling vindicated and ecstatic to superior and haughty. They may also empathize with the losing groups, feeling humility. The losing group, in turn, is likely to feel depressed and even distraught—they may feel cheated and frustrated. However, some may still feel satisfied and successful, depending on how they categorize success. He explains that some people, whether part of the losing group or the winning group, keep those intense feelings to themselves, while others share those feelings with anyone within earshot. The way these situations are approached, by both winning groups and losing groups, speaks to each individual's behavioral limits, which are often set by the adults that child emulates and speaks to each child's level of self-esteem.

Goldberg notes that competition brings powerful and evocative emotions, the roller coaster with thrills of victory and crushing defeat. Those levels of emotion create powerful responses from everyone involved, including the directors, assistant directors, and parents who are heavily invested in these kids' lives and successes. Luckily, most of the people serving as role models for these impressionable young people have experienced enough highs and lows in their own lives that they can navigate these emotions.

Adults aren't perfect though. When emotions take control, our actions can also be influenced. Goldberg notes that even adults can behave inappropriately or ineffectively—or perhaps even childishly. Especially when young people are looking to us to know how to behave, we must ensure that our emotions don't overrule our logic. He adds, "When we allow these strong emotions to sail our ship, we will almost always end up smashed and broken on the rocks." As educators and mentors, regardless of the competition's outcome, we can model for our young charges how to successfully steer their own ships.



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By Rachel James Clevenger

Gretna's Revolution and Director Pat Ribar: The Memory Business

Revolution Director Pat Ribar shares that he has always loved music. Though in high school he started on the Varsity football team, played baseball, and wrestled, he also shared his musical talents in choir and by playing the piano. In fifth grade, he added musical theater to that list of interests and activities. During his senior year, after football season had come to a close, a visiting choir director—from the college Ribar would ultimately attend—sparked Ribar's interest in visiting the school. Ribar notes, "He was a brilliant choir director and musical theater director. He was the mentor that I needed and off I went."

Interestingly, Ribar had no experience in show choir at his own high school because that director "didn't believe in it." College offered Ribar his first experiences with show choir, even though he notes that show choir at that time was more akin to swing choir. However, the college was very invested in musical theater, and Ribar says he "was totally hooked into it." He recalls studying the director as he planned and rehearsed complicated musicals. He would try to guess the types of notes the director was likely to offer after rehearsal. He adds, "I knew then that I wanted to direct choir and musicals."

After he completed his bachelor's degree, Ribar taught at a junior high in Davenport, Iowa, which gave him an opportunity to direct. He notes, "Boy was I green! I mostly had fun with the kids but I drew on the college experience to make things work." He also found additional work as a singing waiter for a Rock Island dinner theater, which gave him a chance to perform as part of the pre-show before the productions. Not only did that have some of the "show choir feel" that he would ultimately grow so familiar with, but he also gained confidence in his abilities.

After finishing his master's degree and six years of teaching experience at the junior high level, he secured a teaching position at Omaha North High in 1992, which had a "struggling program that did not have a show choir," though they did have a Madrigal Choir, which gave Ribar a chance to incorporate show choir and vocal jazz into the established curriculum. Even with the Concert Choir and Madrigal Choir, the school was "relying on the history of the program," Ribar notes, rather than working toward what was currently so popular. Omaha had no major show choir program, other than Westside. Six year later, Ribar and his students were able to visit New York, see a Broadway show, and sing at Shea stadium. This was also Ribar's first exposure to FAME, and he now fully recognized all of the possibilities; the very next year, they started a show choir and traveled to a competition.

In their first FAME competition, they placed 12th. More importantly, though, they saw what other schools and other show choirs were doing, and they became "eager to take on a bigger step." In 2001, they returned to FAME and placed 2nd. They competed at FAME competitions several more times, and they even launched a major competition themselves: the Viking Cup. In 2005, he accepted a position at Gretna High School, taking over a small, but growing, choral program where students

were eager to create a larger show choir, and they began competing multiple times every season, in addition to starting the PRIME TIME competition.

Ribar notes that there were some tremendous challenges in the beginning. At Omaha North, he was still a young teacher, and he was attempting to get those students to "buy in" to the program, using musical theater as the "hook" to grow the program and encourage younger students to learn for themselves the "joy of performing."

THE MEMORY BUSINESS

Ribar notes that he is "in the memory business," and one of his primary objectives is that his students leave high school with wonderful moments to recall about their experiences. He adds that his students "have the same values and idealist goals that every high school student does," and he believes his job is to facilitate that process—that stage of their development—as best he can. "Their goals are my goals," Ribar adds. He recognizes that each new school year can bring a young and inexperienced choir that has boundless opportunity to face challenges and grow. "I aim for joy in their hearts," he shares, and to create music at an extraordinarily high level without ever losing sight of the pleasure of learning and performing.

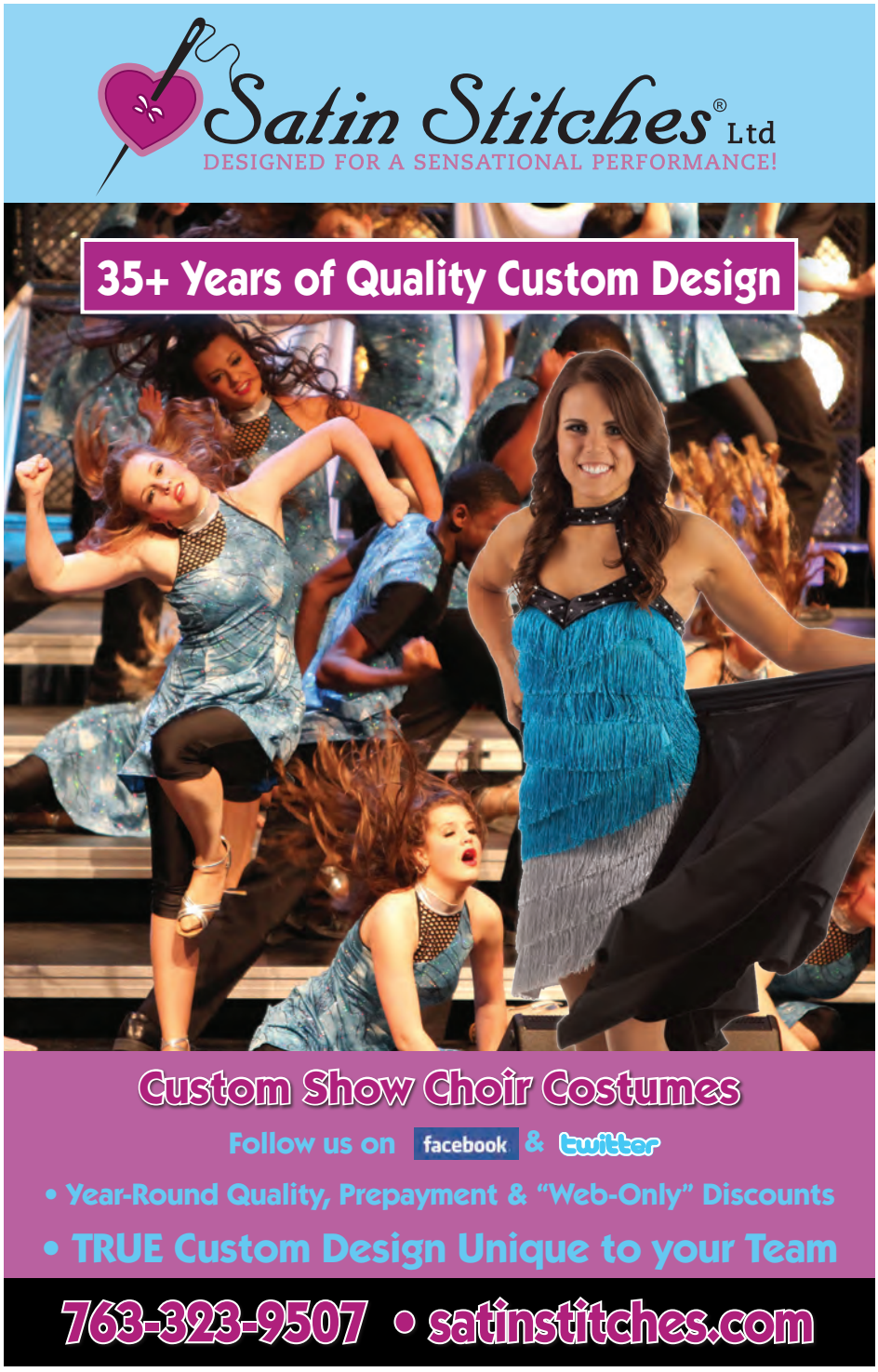
Because he has "always felt that a choral program is a direct reflection of its director," Ribar is conscious of the ethos he creates in the program, recognizing that he is setting up the attitudes for hard work and competition. "The environment for learning is the most critical piece to that puzzle," he notes. "If a kid is stressed out, being manipulated, troubled, hungry, or not having any basic need met, they cannot learn." Ultimately, he wants his students to learn, of course, but also to remember these positive moments for the rest of their lives.

Kelli Hayworth, the mother of a Revolution senior and another Revolution graduate, recalls that when they first transferred from another district, she immediately recognized "how much of a family" the group seemed to be. "There is so much involvement from parents," Hayworth adds, "not because we feel it's an obligation but because it is so exciting to be part of what Pat has created."

Hayworth praises Ribar's passion for music, his creativity, and his love for the kids he teaches. She notes that Ribar suggests he's not necessarily a music teacher but someone who creates memories for his students, and she notes that truth is evident in all of Ribar's work. She adds that he is an excellent teacher but that he also spends time to know each of his students, serving as a mentor to many of them, and offering his talents, his compassion, his charisma, and his energy.

As another Revolution parent and fan of Ribar's work, Randy Jackson notes, "He makes the kids and the

parents come together as a family and everyone works together for the good of the show and the kids." Jackson also praises Ribar for his tireless work in teaching, coaching, and mentoring all of his students. While he notes that Ribar is certainly creating better performers, Jackson sees Ribar's more important work as molding these students and preparing them for their futures, which will be filled with hard work and challenges before success. Jackson concludes, "He knows when to be the teacher and knows when to soften it up, a true gift for any person in the industry of helping and teaching kids."



Assistant Superintendent and the parent of three show choir members, Rich Beran feels lucky that several of his sons have worked with Ribar, who has "that rare ability to put together a show that not only pushes the limits of his students, but is also fun." Beran also sees the long-term influences on these students, as many pursue the arts in higher education after Ribar instills a love of music that lasts throughout his students' lives.

Former student Kelsey Jackson adds that Revolution "was a safe haven for a lot of people." Not only was the group special and unique, Jackson notes, but the choir offered an opportunity for students to be themselves and share their love of music and performing. She praises Ribar for offering students a safe place when "we didn't know where we belonged." Current student Grace Kimnach echoes that sentiment. She states, "Revolution is the place where I have been able to discover who I am and what I love to do. This is the place where I developed as a performer." Kimnach admires Ribar's passion and nonstop efforts to help his students improve. She, like Randy Jackson and Rich Beran, recognizes Ribar's ability to demand excellence in rehearsals without losing the moments of lighthearted fun that

can still flourish in even the most serious environments.

MAKING A STATEMENT

Ribar admits that developing new show ideas can be the most difficult and stressful part of his job. In his planning, he seeks advice from others, but he also knows he must make hard choices for the sake of the best performance. Not surprisingly, considering his strong background in musical theater, he finds that his group usually does best with theatrical or Broadway-based shows. Last year, Josh Green gave Ribar the idea to base a show on Orwell's *1984*, helping Ribar develop the concept and arrangements. Joey Timmerman, one of Ribar's co-workers, helped find musical selections and assisted in developing elaborate and comprehensive set and costuming ideas.

Ribar notes, "We wanted the show to make a statement about humanity and how technology is taking away our independence and polluting our view on simple things in life." Initially, they wanted the show to be akin to a "Tone Poem," but as they choreographed and developed each idea, the show ultimately became a "mini-musical." Their goal was to pull in their audience with complex characters and concepts, allowing the audience to "draw their own conclusions" about the message. Though the parents needed some convincing at first, the students were immediately on board.

Parent Kelli Hayworth found the *1984* "Big Brother" show to be incredibly innovative and exciting. "Pat created a world for the kids to be part of," she notes. "They told a story that left not a dry eye in the place." With the kids leaving behind the traditional sequins to instead costume themselves in painted faces, "cyber locks in their hair," chains, and leather boots, Hayworth adds they were taking a "path not traveled" that created one of those indelible memories that Ribar works to offer his students. Parent Randy Jackson also admires the risks that Ribar took in a "very conservative" culture, a risk that was wildly successful.

Rich Beran considers "Big Brother" unique and ahead of its time for the Midwest, continuously packing the venues when Gretna performed, with waves of students lauding the special and exciting work on stage being offered by Revolution. The show also earned Gretna an invitation to the Canadian Nationals.

Beran believes the best description of Ribar was offered from Gretna's One Act Play director, Carole Carraher, who has won over twenty state championships for her work. When Carraher was asked to critique the "Big Brother" show, she wrote: "Pat Ribar is a genius. He creates masterpieces on the stage."

By Cassidy Clevenger

The Psychology of Holiday Fundraising

Though some might imagine that the holidays are not the best time to embark on fundraising missions—imagining that cash on hand for prospective donors is already spread too thin at the end of the year—the fact is that in the U.S., the majority of all charitable giving occurs between Thanksgiving Day and New Year's Day. Though it may be true that people are busy spending on others, the benevolent mindset and gift-giving mode is ideal timing to promote your cause.

TARGETING AGE GROUPS AND EMOTIONAL APPEALS

In a study conducted by Edge Research in Arlington, Virginia, researchers learned that charities appealing to emotions will fare best in these requests at the end of the year. An astounding 74% of American adults make year-end gifts of some sort. Their poll also uncovered that donors in their 40s—or younger—are likely to be more generous, with four of five in that age group reporting charitable donations over the holidays.

The most charitable bunch was comprised of those in their mid-30s, who give away several hundred dollars apiece on average. Nearly three quarters of those polled noted that they responded to "emotional solicitations" that provided specific information on people or places that needed their assistance. Interestingly, appeals that focused just on an organization's track record—ignoring the emotional level of appeal—were far less successful. Another study by Sea Change Strategies reaffirmed that younger donors were more attuned to emotional messaging. They found that the holidays were in fact an "opportune time" to appeal to these donors.

LOGICAL APPEALS: YEAR-END INCENTIVES

If you are one of the many choral programs established as a 501 (c) (3) organization, you can also encourage year-end donations, so your donors can earn tax breaks at the same time they are helping your program and supporting the arts.

If you do send out requests for support, be certain to mention your goal and objectives. Rather than just saying you need to raise money, name the amount and what it will purchase.

Secondly, you need to establish deadlines, and make sure those deadlines are in the near future. Most of us will put off things on our "To Do" lists that don't seem pressing; some of us will forget that item completely.

Finally, be sure to ask your donor for a specific amount. Though some might feel this is pushy, most people want to have parameters.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORDS

Jen Shang, a philanthropic psychologist, suggested increased donations to your cause can result from a more nuanced choice in your semantic choices. Shang notes that there are nine consistent adjectives used to describe a moral person: Caring, Kind, Helpful, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Hard-Working, Honest, and Generous. She suggests that weaving one or two of these adjectives into your "ask" will help you connect with potential supporters because you are giving them a chance to confirm a positive self-perception.

Because you are more likely to secure donors when you make a personal, meaningful connection to them, Shang encourages you to connect with a donor's core sense of self with a contribution to your organization. Additionally, you want to ensure that you later share with them how their contribution helped your group's campaign and how their dollars made a substantial difference.

RECOGNIZING THE FOUR TYPES OF DECISION MAKERS

In *The Influential Fundraiser*, Bernard Ross and Clare Segal offer

tips on understanding donor mindset when they are asked for a contribution. They explain that most financial decisions are transactional, where a buyer chooses whether to exchange money for a good or service. Donations or fundraising efforts are different though; prospects are either being asked to contribute to a "cause" or something more intangible, or they are being asked to pay far more for goods because the profit becomes a donation. In fundraising efforts, the return on a donor's investment is more abstract—which is why we must link donations with the positive change donors are creating or helping to create.

Just as importantly, you need to understand how people come to decisions. Ross and Segal identify four types of decision makers. The first is the Automatic Decision Maker, who forms a value judgment almost immediately, so first impressions are crucial to your success. With this first type, you must provide a powerful and convincing case, moving to the commitment quickly. The second type is the Experimental Decision Maker, who will test theories and look for confirmation. They need to hear the same idea in a variety of ways, so you need to be prepared for questions.

The third type is the Patient Decision Maker, one who needs time to reflect on any commitment; pushing this person would not work because they do not work on impulse and are likely to feel harassed if they aren't given time to ponder; with this person, ask for a timeframe for when to return, and then follow those guidelines. Finally, there is the Indecisive Decision Maker, who will need reassurance and a great deal of attention. Though they can require a tremendous amount of energy, once you have sold that person, you know you can satisfy anyone's questions.

Whenever possible, try to determine the type of decision maker in front of you, and tailor your sales pitch to that personality. If nothing else, recognize that donors can come to their decisions in a variety of ways.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Cassidy Clevenger is a senior Psychology major at Samford University, with a focus on Applied Gerontology, including aspects of Social Psychology and Behavioral Interactions.

REDUCING UNWANTED STAGE NOISE WITH STAGING PLATFORMS

by Bob Randall
photography provided by Staging Concepts

Most people have experienced unwanted sound in a performing arts venue. Sometimes other patrons nearby are whispering to each other, or a cell phone goes off unexpectedly.

In other cases, the venue itself may not be acoustically adequate and part of the architecture creates unwanted sound or the sound system itself creates feedback. In all cases, unwanted sound is often annoying and distracting.

In the world of temporary staging, we are highly aware of the unwanted sound a staging platform can create, and we are continually trying to innovate solutions to unwanted sound when people walk on our staging products.

Because unwanted sound takes away from the performance on stage, venue experts focus a lot of attention on minimizing and eliminating it. When we build temporary stage extensions, seating risers or stage traps, we work very hard to not only produce platforms that match the permanent stage aesthetically, but also to blend in to the acoustics of the space as well.

THE NEED TO QUANTIFY SOUND

We heard from several industry experts that various opinions existed about using honeycomb core lids, solid core lids, acoustical liners, and various carpeted surfaces in platforms to minimize sound, but the lack of data often made it difficult to recommend the right platform configuration for a particular theatre. And when a theatre consultant or venue manager asked us how various configurations performed acoustically, we responded with conjecture, rather than facts and data. So recently, we worked closely with the Acoustics Laboratory at the University of Hartford in Connecticut to help quantify the sound produced by various platform configurations. In other words, we wanted to bring data to a part of the staging industry that appeared to be lacking.

THE STUDY

The acoustic experts at the University of Hartford were supplied 14 different platforms on which to conduct acoustical testing. The acoustic lab scientists utilized a tapping machine to simulate footfall noise on the platforms in a testing procedure commonly used to measure noise attenuation of flooring materials in multi-family housing (ISO 3741-Acoustics-Determination of Sound Power Levels of Noise Sources using Sound Pressure-Precision Methods for Reverberation Rooms). In essence, the tapping machine applies hammer-like pressure onto the various platform configurations while the sound produced is measured in a controlled acoustics lab.

After several tests, the tapping machine and sound room were considered stable and repeatable test methods for measuring the footfall sound on platforms. The sound produced by the tapping machine is measured in decibels (db's) at a wide range of frequencies (Hz) for each platform. From there, we are able to compare the sound produced by multiple platform configurations.

THE RESULTS

In the end, we found that a solid core platform acoustically performs as well as a honeycomb platform; both platforms produced approximately 111 decibels of noise across all frequencies measured. The solid core platform is constructed with a 1" Marine Tech plywood substrate (SC90 platform produced by Staging Concepts). The honeycomb platform is constructed with a laminated honeycomb core (produced by another industry manufacturer). Within the frequencies typically cited for footfall noise, each platform measured as follows (lower dB's are quieter):

	Frequencies (Hz)			
	400	500	630	800
Solid Core Platform	101	103	105	106
Honeycomb Platform	105	106	105	104

*Measurement in dB's

We also found that a solid core platform utilizing acoustical insulation significantly improves the acoustical performance of a platform. When we added acoustical lining to the underside of the platform, the sound measured across all frequencies is reduced

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by three decibels. Within the critical frequencies for footfall noise, platforms with and without acoustical insulations perform as follows:

	Frequencies (Hz)			
	400	500	630	800
Solid Core Platform (no insulation)	101	103	104	105
Solid Core Platform (WITH insulation)	99	101	101	101

*Measurement in dB's

Finally, out of all platform configurations tested, a thickly carpeted surface utilizing a solid core and acoustical insulation reduces footfall noise the most. While not all venues want to have a carpeted platform, it is noteworthy to point out a solid core densely carpeted platform reduces the average sound over a solid core polyvinyl surface platform by 26 decibels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the end, if eliminating unwanted sound is important for your venue, we recommend using a densely carpeted solid core platform for your space. If you are unable to utilize carpet for your seating riser or stage extension, we recommend utilizing a solid core platform with acoustical insulation.

Eliminating unwanted noise will make the performance more enjoyable for your patrons and for the performers too. The staging platforms should feel and sound permanent as well as solid. We hope the data produced in this study helps consultants and venue managers make the best choices for their performing arts spaces. If you would like more information on the study conducted, please contact Staging Concepts at 1-800-337-2096 or at info@stagingconcepts.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Bob Randall is Vice President of Staging Concepts in Minneapolis, MN where he leads sales, marketing and project management functions and serves on the executive team. Bob has his MBA in Finance and is a doctoral candidate in Organization Development.

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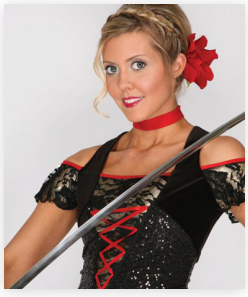

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SINGING VS. SHOUTING:

Vocal Advice from an Expert, Part 2

by Dina Else

Welcome back! Now that we've ensured the proper body alignment is well underway and have established the basics of breath intake, let's journey a step further into the topics of breath support and breath management.

We hear the terms "breath support" and "breath management" thrown around a lot. What's the difference in these two phrases? Breath support refers to the correct breath pressure under the folds. Giovanni Lamperti says it this way: "The vocal folds are helpless without the power of compressed breath to feed their pulsation. Therefore the lungs should never collapse."

In *Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults*, James McKinney says it like this: "The breath of a singer is the actuator of the vocal instrument. The pressure of the breath against the vocal folds sets them in vibration and phonation ensues." Breath management, on the other hand, is the ability to control the rate in which you return to a body neutral position toward the end of a longer phrase, the slow ascent of the diaphragm if you will.

As we begin our conversation about this facet of singing, let's talk about "diaphragmatic support." Yes, the diaphragm muscle is highly involved in the process of pressurizing and compressing the air. Furthermore, the diaphragmatic involvement is necessary to achieve proper "breath support." Let's be clear about this however; the diaphragm is an *involuntary* muscle, and you do *not* have control of it. It triggers into action as the lungs begin to fill and then, through controlling the muscles involved in the breathing process, we can control the ascent and involvement of the diaphragmatic muscle. This is, of course, safely assuming that the proper descent of the diaphragm muscle was achieved during the breath intake.

Step one in ensuring the continued involvement of the diaphragm muscle is to keep the rib cage expanded, with a certain amount of buoyancy throughout the phrase. Step two: Do not let the ribs collapse as the diaphragm slowly makes its ascent.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE ABOVE DIRECTIVES

I'm very careful to monitor my singers as we work on this step. Singers tend to take things to the extremes and "hold" the ribs out with the muscles locking and tensing, versus keeping the ribs out with buoyancy. The quickest way to get your singers to feel

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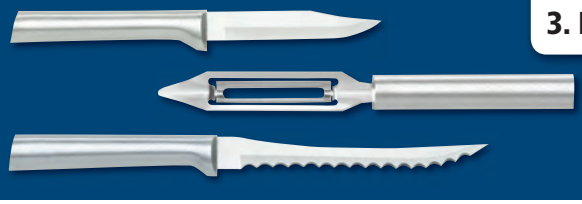

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the difference is to have them "hold" the ribs out and "lock" their muscles in place so they can feel what NOT to do. Then have them find that rib expansion associated with movement or buoyancy.

My favorite tool for working this is an exercise band. I'm careful to use the lightest weight band so that the expanded buoyancy is the primary focus. The thicker/heavier the band, the more the students will want to engage their "lock and hold" muscles. Using the band helps the singers realize that there doesn't need to be a total collapse of the ribs and that it IS possible to keep the ribs lifted and buoyant during the sung phrase.

Here are a few more bits of wisdom from Giovanni Lamperti: "Generally, faulty singing is caused by awkward respiration. In fact all bad habits of the throat are merely efforts of protection against clumsy management of the breath." My other favorite quote of his on this subject is this: "Power either builds or destroys. The energy in regular vibration is constructive. The violence in irregular vibration is destructive."

In regard to the muscles involved in breath management, James McKinney notes, "Perhaps the best way to gain control of the exhalation process is to try to maintain the expansion around the middle of the body, the upper abdomen, the lower ribs, and the back." In *The Structure of Singing*, Richard Miller says it this way: "A skillful singer remains in the inspiratory position for as long as possible, maintaining a relatively high sternal position (taking care not to elevate it in military-parade manner), allowing muscles of the lateral abdominal wall to stay close to the position of inhalation and consequently delaying early rib cage collapse. Of course, something must eventually move, either the chest wall or the abdominal wall. Slowing these movements depends on an acquired, disciplined breath management technique." Miller goes on to say, "A technique of lateral abdominal wall retention and the noble, elevated sternum has for centuries been known as 'appoggio'. Clearly, one cannot continue to inhale while phonating, but the singer can retard the upward surge of the diaphragm and the collapse of the rib cage by training the musculature of the abdominal wall in cooperation with the pectoral musculature, to delay normal collapse of the breath mechanism."

In studio, I talk to my singers about their abdominals, lateral abdominals and their intercostal muscles. When the inspiration has been achieved correctly, the lower torso has expanded laterally, dorsally and frontally. I'm a firm believer that if singers don't *understand* what's working then they can't *control* what's working. I make sure they understand that all of these muscle groups are involved in helping the body "remain in the posture of inhalation." I'm also very careful to focus in on the stomach wall. I'm not sure about your singers, but mine tend to want to protrude the stomach wall and call it good. When this happens, the outward push causes laryngeal tension. We aim for all

of the muscle groups *working in combination* to "remain expanded" (think 3-D), therefore keeping the diaphragm muscle engaged.

As I shared in the last issue, I like to explain breath management to my students this way: The breath intake is their "deposit," the beginning of the phrase is their "savings" and the end of their phrase is their "spending." We've just extensively covered the "savings" portion of the breath management. Now let's delve into the management aspect (the spending phase) in more detail.

MASTERING *APPOGGIO*

In order to "remain in the posture of inhalation, stay expanded or remain in the inspiratory position," a singer needs to master *appoggio*, a term used to indicate how the muscle groups work together to achieve the proper balance of push and pull. The term *appoggio* is an Italian word that means to "lean against." A singer's main goal during breath management is to stay as long as possible in the "inspiratory position," but only as long as is comfortable. A singer's responsibility is to identify and drill the natural processes involved in developing the "push and pull" of "remaining expanded" and then to keep these muscles engaged so that breath support remains intact during the last part of the phrase. I like to tell the students that this is like having one foot on the gas and one foot on the brake, counterbalancing for control. James McKinney describes it this way: "The *'breathing in'* muscles stay active during the controlled exhalation stage; they help retain breath in the body by offering resistance to the breathing-out muscles, and assist in the process of breath support thereby."

I feel that this (the "spending" or "controlled exhalation") is the aspect of breath management that is the least understood. Many choral directors know you've got to achieve an *"in, down and out"* breath intake that expands the torso frontally, dorsally and laterally. Many—though by no means all—choral directors know that the torso and ribs should remain expanded and buoyant at the onset and beginning of the phrase. What many choral directors don't realize is that the *appoggio* muscle interaction, the push and pull, should remain through the end of the phase. When we

recognize this moment, our main goal is to keep the diaphragm muscle involved/engaged during the entire phonation phase. In order to do that, we can't allow the ribs or torso to collapse, even toward the end of the phrase.

BREATH AS CONSTANTLY MOVING ENERGY, NOT WEIGHT

As we conclude our time together on this topic, keep in mind that breath must *never* be used as weight; it is *energy*, something that is *always moving*. Keeping this a mantra in your rehearsals will pay huge dividends and keep you from having to diagnose and fix all of the issues that come from forcing the breath process and using your air as weight. Rather than the idea of feeling like a singer has to transport their breath out into the room, I find it very useful to work with the idea of "going down into the breath" or the feeling of "keeping the breath in your body" as the tone leaves your face. In closing, I have a few more maxims from Giovanni Lamperti:

"As a blossom draws strength to bloom from the plant, so the voice draws energy to sing from the body."

"Exhale through each note."

"The moment you have energy of breath sufficient for the phrase, re-adjustable for all details and all pitches in the phrase, yet continuous from start to finish, you can sing."

"Loose, pushed out breath is useless even injurious, though you have lungs full, for it causes local efforts, irregular vibration and disrupted energies."

I'd like to leave you with a tip I use as I travel and clinic show choirs. This works wonders as the learning process moves from singing to the skill of singing and dancing. If the choreographer will allow it, have your singers hiss as they learn the choreography. This will help them incorporate proper breath support into their muscle memory alongside the choreography. It's one thing for the choreographer to constantly remind the singers to breathe (thank you to those of you that do this), but if you can make them hiss, you *know for a fact* that they are doing it! If they've already learned the choreography, no worries, this technique is helpful during all phases of the learning process and keeps the breath a primary focus.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dina Else is a highly sought after vocal technician/specialist, choral clinician, motivational speaker, festival conductor, and adjudicator throughout the United States. The choral ensembles and show choirs she works with are consistently awarded "Best Vocals" and highest honors in competitions and festivals.

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COPYRIGHT FOR SHOW CHOIRS

by Jann-Michael Greenburg

Complying with copyright laws has never been easier or more straightforward than it is today. Almost all publishers are familiar with show choirs and how their music is used, and the music publishing community exists to encourage the licensed use of their music.

From the standpoint of participation by publishers, music directors, arrangers and choreographers should have a massive variety of material to choose from.

LICENSING MADE SIMPLE

Music directors, arrangers, and choreographers should have a working knowledge of custom arrangement licenses, mechanical licenses, and synchronization licenses. In general, these three licenses are the only licenses that will be germane to Show Choirs.

CUSTOM ARRANGEMENT LICENSING

Custom arrangement licenses are needed whenever an arrangement is being created of music that differs from what has been published. Another way of saying this is that whenever music is altered from its original form it becomes a derivative work. For example, the song Yesterday, written by Paul McCartney and John Lennon, was originally written for guitar and vocals. If one wants to make an arrangement of this work for a show choir, one must add in the various vocals, the instruments needed for accompaniment, and the parts for those various instruments. Thus, a custom arrangement license is needed and the permission of the publisher or rights' holder is required to make this derivative work. The publishers frequently charge for this license and the amount of money for each license generally varies between $150 and $300 per song.

It is also true that if one is taking stock sheet music and combining it into a medley, by cutting and pasting or re-typing the music into a notation program, one must obtain a custom arrangement license. There are many writer restrictions where the writers do not want their works combined with other writer's works and those restrictions must be observed or the license will be voided.

If one is re-voicing an arrangement, simply moving it from SSAA to TTBB, one must obtain a custom arrangement license. It may often be the case that the songwriter had a specific gender in mind when the song was created. Therefore, changing the voicing from a soprano to a bass might not be in keeping with the writer's wishes and the writer must give his or her consent. This is particularly true with works that were originally written as part of a dramatic presentation, like musical theater.

Lyric changes, using pieces of stock sheet music that are combined (cut and pasted into another arrangement and then photocopied), or using any small section of recognizable music (regardless of the time or number of measures sampled) will require a custom arrangement license.

SYNCH LICENSING

Whenever one is going to synchronize music with a moving image (as in a performance video, music video, slide show with music playing in the background, or movie) and one is going to make duplications of the resultant video or movie, one must acquire a synchronization license from the publisher or rights holder of the music composition(s) to make those duplications.

A copy or duplication would be defined as any tangible copy, without regard to the fleeting nature of the tangibility. It is important to remember that in this digital age, a copy does not have to be a DVD or a file on a CD. It could be a file that is emailed to a friend, it could be a video file that is exhibited in a school auditorium, or it could simply be a file uploaded onto a social media site like YouTube or Facebook. All of these would qualify as duplications as defined in US Code Title 17 of the Copyright Act. It is very important to remember that we are talking about "copyright," not "salesright." In general, the law is not concerned whether or not the duplications were given away for free or for monetary gain. The issues surrounding the duplication and the motivation for the duplication may or may not come into play when calculating damages, but someone who makes a video recording of a show choir performance and makes 40 copies of the performance to give to the student members of the show choir would be infringing on the copyrights of the music contained in the video recording if this happened without the permission of the rights holders.

MECHANICAL LICENSING

When one is making a sound recording for the purpose of making duplications or copies of that recording, one must obtain mechanical licenses from the rights holders. The great news is

that a mechanical license is very inexpensive, less than $0.10 per duplicated recording if the musical composition is under 5 minutes, and, for the most part, it is compulsory. This means that by law, if a musical composition has been recorded prior and duplicated for commercial dissemination, the rights holder or publisher of the composition must grant the mechanical license. The only exception to this rule is if the musical composition was created as part of a dramatic work, then it is exempt from the laws governing mechanical license. So, in short, the statutory mechanical license laws would govern making a cover album of the music of Coldplay, while the statutory mechanical license laws would not govern making a cover album of music from the Sound of Music.

HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN THE LICENSES THAT ARE NEEDED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE?

Obtaining Mechanical Licenses

The Harry Fox Agency specializes in the issuance of mechanical licenses and their interface, called Songfile, is very simple to use. All major publishers work with the Harry Fox Agency, which is owned by the National Music Publishers Association, and The Harry Fox Agency has reciprocal agreements with many of the largest collection organizations in the world.

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Obtaining Custom Arrangement Licenses

Most print music and music publishers have excellent licensing departments for the issuance of custom arrangement licenses. Alfred Music Publishing, Music Sales, and Boosey and Hawkes are all very well run companies who go out of their way to be of assistance. The largest issuer of custom arrangement licenses in the world is Tresóna, who works with all music publishers and represents the catalogues of Hal Leonard, Sony/ATV, Universal, and BMG and works with all music publishers to make sure that 100% of all music licenses are paid out to the publishers and accounted for properly.

Obtaining Synchronization Licenses

All publishers have synchronization licensing departments, and there are also services who process micro licenses (synch licenses for home use recordings of ensemble based performances) for many of the publishers who are not staffed to process thousands of small dollar requests.

Warning Signs and Areas of Danger

In recent years, businesses have seemed to crop up that specialize in charging ensembles up-front, non-refundable-fees for coordinating their licensing needs. These non-refundable fees drive up the cost of music, and there is no music publisher in the United States who charges for license requests. This practice does a tremendous disservice to the schools. There should never be an up-front fee for simply requesting a music license.

There has also been an uptick in music sites that offer sheet music for sale while promising the show choir the exclusive use of an arrangement for thousands of dollars. No retail site has the ability to make such a representation because the arrangement belongs to the music publisher, not to the retail site. Often, the arrangement is simply a copy of an arrangement that has been licensed to another school.

In closing, please keep in mind that the music publishers do everything possible to be of assistance to the show choir community, and by taking the time to comply you are helping to ensure a steady supply of the music rights every show choir will need to be successful.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jann-Michael Greenburg is in his third year at University of Edinburgh School of Law and is currently clerking in the Tresóna Legal Department. You can learn more by visiting www.tresonamultimedia.com or emailing licensing@tresonamultimedia.com

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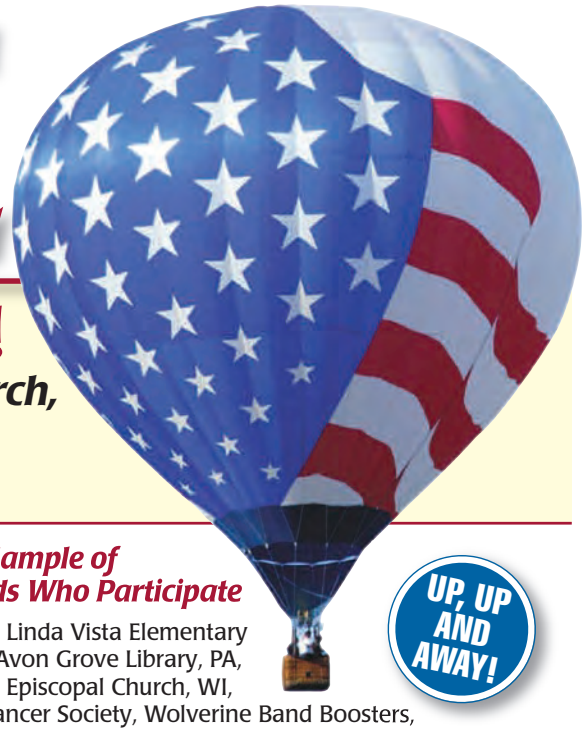

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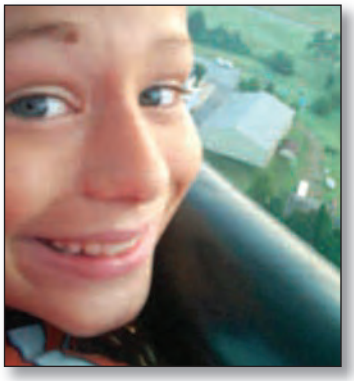

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